

# **News from Ed Markey**

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT: David Moulton**

**(202) 225-2836**

## **MARKEY STATEMENT OPPOSING HARD LIQUOR ADVERTISING ON BROADCAST NETWORKS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. --**

: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, released the following statement today concerning NBC's agreement with the hard liquor industry to air hard liquor ads on the NBC network:

"The public health consequences of alcohol consumption are staggering. Alcohol is a leading cause of many public health ailments for millions of Americans including cirrhosis of the liver, central and peripheral nervous systems damage, damage to unborn children including birth defects, mental retardation, and fetal alcohol syndrome. Moreover, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has noted that one person dies in an alcohol-related car crash every 32 minutes.

"Concern about these negative consequences of hard liquor alcohol consumption led industry leaders over a generation ago to refrain from advertising such products because it was improper to encourage youthful television viewers to consume hard liquor.

"The decades-long self-imposed restraint is ending and I believe that it represents poor public policy. I implore NBC to reconsider its actions.

"Television broadcasters are especially favored by the government in many areas of public policy because they deliver to the American people free, universally-available television programming. The other side of the public policy coin is that television broadcasters discharge special obligations because of their valuable trusteeship of the public's airwaves.

"I believe that it is contrary to the public interest responsibilities that they display hard liquor advertisements on shows or sporting events that inevitably will reach audiences composed of millions of kids, such as during the Olympics.

"Policymakers should endeavor to obtain the equivalent self-restraint on the part of the hard liquor companies and television broadcasters today that our parent's generation found in the corporate executives of their era, who despite the prospects of additional revenue, found it simply inappropriate to pitch hard liquor to children. I think most parents today would still agree that pitching hard liquor when under-aged children are in the audience is shameful."

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